

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8448

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 02572

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UK, PINT

SUBJECT: THE THATCHER SHADOW CABINET

REF: LONDON 2201

SUMMARY: IN FORMING A NEW SHADOW CABINET, MARGARET THATCHER HAS REPLACED SEVERAL STRONG HEATH SUPPORTERS, RECALLED REGINALD MAUDLING TO BE SHADOW FOREIGN SECRETARY, AND BROUGHT IN SEVERAL YOUNGER CONSERVATIVES. HER APPOINTMENTS REPRESENT AN EFFORT TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY WHILE INTRODUCING A NEW LOOK. END SUMMARY.

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1. MRS. THATCHER ANNOUNCED COMPOSITION OF HER SHADOW TEAM FEBRUARY 18. THE NOMINATIONS REFLECT HER ANNOUNCED INTENTION OF MAINTAINING CONTINUITY WHILE INTRODUCING CHANGE IN THE PARTY'S POLICIES AS WELL AS PERSONALITIES. THE BIGGEST SURPRISE WAS THE NAMING OF REGINALD MAUDLING AS SHADOW FOREIGN SECRETARY, WHICH RETURNS HIM TO A SIGNIFICANT FRONT-BENCH POSITION AFTER MORE THAN TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS OF POLITICAL ECLIPSE. (MAUDLING RESIGNED AS HOME SECRETARY IN 1972 WHEN HIS NAME WAS LINKED TO SEVERAL DUBIOUS BUSINESS ENTERPRISES THEN UNDER INVESTIGATION. HE HAS SINCE BEEN CLEARED OF ANY WRONGDOING.)

2. MRS. THATCHER DEFTLY REMOVED SEVERAL OUTSPOKEN HEATH SUPPORTERS FROM THE SHADOW CABINET LIST -- GEOFFREY RIPPON, PETER WALKER, AND ROBERT CARR. RIPPON (FOREIGN AFFAIRS) BEAT THE GUN BY ANNOUNCING HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE UNDER MRS. THATCHER. WALKER (DEFENSE), INFORMED THAT THE AXE WAS ABOUT TO FALL, ANNOUNCED HIS OWN DEPARTURE, AND AT THE SAME TIME WARNED THE PARTY AND MRS. THATCHER OF THE DANGERS OF A SHIFT TO A STRONGER MONETARISTIC POLICY (I.E. AS ADVOCATED BY SIR KEITH JOSEPH). CARR (SHADOW CHANCELLOR) MADE PUBLIC HIS EXCHANGE OF LETTERS WITH MRS. THATCHER AND ISSUED A STATEMENT OFFERING HER SUPPORT FROM THE BACK BENCHES. PETER THOMAS (WALES) HAD EARLIER INDICATED HIS DESIRE TO LEAVE THE FRONT BENCH, AND HIS DEPARTURE IS NOT CONSIDERED HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. NICHOLAS SCOTT (HOUSING) WAS RELIEVED OF HIS DUTIES AND HOUSING PLACED UNDER THE SHADOW ENVIRONMENT MINISTER. PAUL CHANNON (ENVIRONMENT) WAS ALSO RELEASED.

3. NEW FIGURES IN THE SHADOW CABINET ARE AIREY NEAVE (NORTHERN IRELAND), NICHOLAS EDWARDS (WALES), GEORGE YOUNGER (DEFENSE), NORMAN FOWLER (SOCIAL SERVICES), AND SALLY OPPENHEIM (CONSUMER AFFAIRS). YOUNGER HAS HAD JUNIOR MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, BUT ALL OTHERS ARE REASONABLY INEXPERIENCED AT THE CABINET LEVEL. NEAVE, WHO WAS FORMERLY PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, UNDERSECRETARY FOR AIR, AND SERVED AS CAMPAIGN MANAGER

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FOR MRS. THATCHER IN THE LEADERSHIP CONTEST, RETAINS HIS POSITION AS HEAD OF MRS. THATCHER'S PRIVATE OFFICE.

4. MRS. THATCHER HAS TREATED HER COMPETITORS IN THE LEADERSHIP RACE WELL. JAMES PRIOR REMAINS SHADOW EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY, JOHN PEYTON REMAINS SHADOW LEADER OF THE HOUSE, WILLIAM WHITELAW BECOMES DEPUTY LEADER OF THE PARTY AND REMAINS SHADOW SPOKESMAN ON DEVOLUTION.

(NO DECISION HAS YET BEEN ANNOUNCED ON WHO WILL REPLACE
WHITELAW AS CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY SINCE MRS. THATCHER
DOES NOT OFFICIALLY BECOME LEADER OF THE PARTY UNTIL
FEBRUARY 20.) FINALLY, SIR GEOFFREY HOWE REPLACES CARR
AS SHADOW CHANCELLOR; WHILE HE ESPOUSES SOME MONETARIST
POLICIES SIMILAR TO THOSE FAVORED BY SIR KEITH JOSEPH,
HE IS KNOWN AS A MODERATE ON SOCIAL ISSUES AND IS FAR
MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE YOUNGER CONSERVATIVES THAN IS SIR
KEITH.

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5. A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON WHAT JOB MRS. THATCHER WOULD GIVE JOSEPH HIMSELF. WHITELOW AND OTHER MODERATES REPORTEDLY RESISTED HIS APPOINTMENT AS SHADOW CHANCELLOR, SO MRS. THATCHER HAS ENTRUSTED HIM WITH OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TORY RESEARCH AND POLICY INSTEAD, A POSITION THAT REMAINS TO BE DEFINED IN PRACTICE.

6. MRS. THATCHER KEEPS IN THE OLD POSITIONS PATRICK JENKIN (ENERGY), NORMAN ST. JOHN STEVAS (EDUCATION AND THE ARTS), MICHAEL HESELTINE (INDUSTRY), ALICK BUCHANAN-
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SMITH (SCOTLAND), HUMPHREY ATKINS (CHIEF WHIP), LORD CARRINGTON (LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS), AND LORD HAILSHAM (SHADOW MINISTER WITHOUT SPECIFIC DUTIES). SHE ALSO IS KEEPING IAN GILMOUR (SHIFTING HIM FROM NORTHERN IRELAND TO HOME AFFAIRS), AND TIMOTHY RAISON (FROM PRICES TO ENVIRONMENT).

7. COMMENT: IT IS PERHAPS TOO EARLY TO PASS JUDGMENT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NEW TEAM. A NUMBER OF ITS MEMBERS WILL HAVE TO WORK HARD TO COMPETE EFFECTIVELY WITH THEIR OPPOSITE NUMBERS ON THE GOVERNMENT FRONT BENCH. THE APPOINTMENTS SUGGEST THAT MRS. THATCHER INTENDS TO AVOID ANY BIG POLICY SHIFTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD. SOME MEMBERS OF THE OLD HEATH TEAM, NOW ON THE BACK BENCHES, WITH AN EYE TO FUTURE LEADERSHIP CONTESTS WITHIN THE PARTY, CAN BE EXPECTED TO KEEP CLOSE WATCH ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MRS. THATCHER AND HER TEAM. PROTESTATIONS OF COMPLETE SUPPORT NOTWITHSTANDING, THE STATEMENTS ISSUED BY WALKER AND CARR DO ADD UP TO A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE OF VIEWS WHICH MAY BRING MRS. THATCHER DIFFICULTIES IN THE COMING MONTHS.

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